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Thursday, 20 February 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Murmokaitė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Smaïl Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I would like to warmly welcome His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, and I now give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: I thank His Excellency Mr. Smaïl Chergui for his presence here today. I attach the highest importance to close ties with the African Union (AU). We at the United Nations will continue to work hand-in-hand with the African Union to promote development and lasting peace across the continent.

The crisis that continues to unfold in the Central African Republic poses a test for the entire international community. The situation in the country has been on the agenda of the Security Council for many years now, but today's emergency is of another, more disturbing, magnitude. It is a calamity with a strong claim on the conscience of humankind. Over the past year we have seen, in quick succession, the violent overthrow of the Government, the collapse of State institutions and a descent into lawlessness and sectarian brutality. Over 2.5 million people — more than half the population — need immediate humanitarian assistance.

The new acting Head of State, Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, is committed to building State authority, and I commend her valiant efforts. But with no budget, hardly any resources and faced with the country's pervasive poverty, her abilities are sharply constrained. The path towards the restoration of State authority will be a long one.

Innocent civilians are being killed in large numbers. Those victims are not so-called "collateral damage" from fighting between rebel groups. They are being killed purposefully, targeted for their religious beliefs and for their community affiliation — for who they are. Muslims in particular are being targeted, but the ex-Séléka continue to attack Christians as well.

Almost 1 million people have been displaced, with many homes burned to the ground with the purpose of preventing their return. Whole populations are being moved. A creeping de facto partition of the country is setting in, with Muslims in one part and Christians in the other. That separation is sowing the seeds of conflict and instability for years, maybe generations, to come.

The African Union and France have deployed troops to the Central African Republic to help stem the violence. We owe those leaders and soldiers our gratitude for saving so many lives and providing protection where they can. We owe the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) and Operation Sangaris our solidarity and assistance.

However, given the scale and geographic breadth of the violence, the security requirements far exceed the capabilities of the number of international troops now deployed. In places where there are no international forces, the choice for far too many civilians is to flee or be killed.

The human family must not shy away from what is happening today in the Central African Republic, or from our responsibilities — both the Council's and mine — under the Charter of the United Nations. Events in the Central African Republic have implications across the region and summon us to defend universal values. This complex security, humanitarian, human rights and political crisis demands a comprehensive and integrated response.

The United Nations is working with the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the European Union and the World Bank to address the country's diverse challenges. But those efforts will prove fruitless unless we do more to end the atrocity crimes, the destruction of communities and the mass displacement of populations.

The Security Council has asked for my recommendations for a future United Nations peacekeeping operation. I will soon report to the Council on the outlines of a mission with a robust

mandate to protect civilians and promote stability. But the deployment of a peacekeeping operation, if authorized, will take months; the people of the Central African Republic do not have months to wait. The international community must act decisively now to prevent any further worsening of the situation and to respond to the dire needs of the country's people. In that spirit, today I propose a six-point initiative to address the greatest risks being faced by the people of the Central African Republic.

First, and most important, I call for the rapid reinforcement of the African Union and French troops now on the ground, with additional deployments of at least 3,000 more troops and police. That new personnel, including formed police units, should deploy as soon as possible, in the coming days and weeks, and have the necessary mobility, including air mobility, to be able to operate wherever required. AU Commission President Zuma has informed me that she will propose an expansion of MISCA to the AU Peace and Security Council. I welcome her initiative and urge members of the Peace and Security Council to endorse it. President Hollande of France has announced that Operation Sangaris will be reinforced by some 25 per cent, to a total of 2,000. In addition, the European Union is poised to increase its planned deployment from 500 to 1,000, with an initial operating capacity on the ground in early March. I am grateful for those commitments. But more are needed, quickly, and the broader international community must share the burden.

Secondly, I propose that all international forces in the Central African Republic be brought under a coordinated command and that the mission of those forces be focused on the most urgent priorities, that is, containing the violence, protecting civilians, preventing further displacements, creating a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and laying the groundwork for the handover to a United Nations peacekeeping force as soon as possible.

Thirdly, I propose that the African troops that join that force be provided with logistic and financial support, including rations, water and fuel and reimbursement for their major non-lethal military equipment. The estimated cost of that package, consisting of the bare essentials, would be $38 million for a six-month bridging period.

Fourthly, I call for rapid, tangible support to the Government of the Central African Republic to help it establish a minimum capacity to function. That support should include the financial assistance necessary to get police back on the streets, judges back in the courtrooms and prison guards back on the job. I am pleased to announce that today Denmark confirmed a contribution of $2 million to that initiative. I intend to see those resources put to use quickly. Norway has also confirmed today that it will make a donation to the effort.

Fifthly, I call for the acceleration of a political and reconciliation process to prevent a further fraying of the communal bonds and to lay the groundwork for an end to the conflict. Community and religious leaders will have an especially important role to play in promoting tolerance, peaceful coexistence and non-violence. A political process will also require the dynamic engagement of ECCAS, the AU and the international community. I would like to pay particular tribute to the tireless efforts of the ECCAS Chief Mediator, President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo.

The United Nations is reinforcing the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic's analytical and operational capabilities so that we can help the national authorities to put the transition back on track, expand State authority and establish credible institutions throughout the country.

Accountability and justice measures must be key elements of any peace and reconciliation process. More immediately, such measures will contribute to the prevention of ongoing human rights violations. I am pleased to announce that the Chairperson of the commission of inquiry mandated by the Security Council, along with an advance team, will arrive in the Central African Republic to take up their important work.

Sixthly and finally, I appeal for urgent funding for humanitarian aid, which is currently insufficient to address the crisis. Only 15 per cent of the resources needed for this year have been received, despite generous pledges made at last month's funding conference in Brussels.My Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Valerie Amos, is in the Central African Republic. She has expressed shock at what she saw in Bossangoa today, and noted that tensions between communities are high and that people fear for their lives. She stressed the need for more troops on the ground to provide security and protection across the country.

Over the past few days, my senior colleagues and I have reached out to dozens of Member States to seek their support for my proposals. I have been encouraged by the positive response. Some are considering sending additional troops and police; others have pledged to provide budget support for the Government. Those commitments will bring tangible dividends in the coming days.

The United Nations, for its part, thanks to generous support from Canada and others, has allocated $5 million from the MISCA trust fund to provide essential communications equipment to African troops, and those items are being delivered in Bangui as I speak.

The six-point initiative I have just put forward aims to support and complement the hard work now being carried out by a range of actors. It is designed to achieve the most pressing objectives, namely, stabilizing the security situation and saving lives that would otherwise be lost to senseless sectarian hatred. The proposals call for contributions from many quarters. They also compel us to avoid a piecemeal approach in which some proposals receive more support than others. To succeed, the proposals must be embraced and implemented as an integrated whole.

We know what is happening in the Central African Republic. We know why it is different from previous outbreaks of violence. We know why it matters to all of us and what we must do.

Knowledge is not all we have. Through collective action, as envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations, we have the power to stop the killing and save the Central African Republic from its current nightmare.

I urge the Council to support my proposal, and I urge Member States to take the action necessary to implement it. Let us show the people of the Central African Republic that the United Nations stands with them and that the support they so urgently need is on its way. This is our shared responsibility. The people of the Central African Republic have asked for our help. I urge the Council to join me and respond to their call.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Chergui.

Mr. Chergui (*spoke in French*): We are meeting here to discuss a serious situation that is receiving increasing international attention. We fervently hope that this meeting will mark a new and decisive stage in the international mobilization for the Central African Republic.

I thank the Security Council for its ongoing follow-up of this issue. I wish in particular to convey the African Union's (AU) gratitude to the President of the Council for having been kind enough to change the timing of this meeting so as to allow our delegation to participate. Let me also reiterate, on behalf of Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the appreciation of the AU to the Secretary-General for his continued commitment and personal involvement to alleviate the suffering of the people of the Central African Republic.

In recent days, the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission have been in regular contact with respect to what should be done to help strengthen international action to assist the Central African Republic. These exchanges also show their common concern about this tragedy and their conviction that an effective international response must necessarily be based on a shared vision of the actions required, in line with the close and innovative partnership that the United Nations and the AU are building in the field of peace and security.

As the Council is aware, the situation in the Central African Republic has for several years been at the heart of the priorities of the AU. At the time of the resumption of hostilities in that country in December 2012, and precisely because we feared that the situation might lead to generalized violence, with disastrous consequences for the Central African Republic and its people, we called for coordinated international action in support of the efforts of the countries in the region, under the leadership of Presidents Idriss Deby Itno of Chad and Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo.

I take this opportunity to reiterate our gratitude for the willingness of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the personal commitment of the leaders of the region and the sacrifices made in the quest for peace, security and stability in the Central African Republic.

Those preventive efforts have not succeeded. We must draw lessons from this for our future activities

aimed at promoting peace, security and stability on the continent, as the international community cannot continue to wait for disastrous situations to develop before taking the necessary speedy, robust actions.

Today we face a difficult and complex situation requiring that we be diligent, effective and flexible. Our actions must be based on a comprehensive assessment of current efforts and the challenges ahead. They must deliver tailored responses to the problems we are facing.

On 19 December 2013, the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) took over from the Mission of the Economic Community of Central African States for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic. The handover took place in an extremely challenging context marked by the attacks against Bangui in early December 2013, acts of extreme violence against the civilian population, forced displacements that affected both national and foreign communities, as well as community and religious hatreds and tensions, which so deeply undermine the future of the country and its social cohesion.

Given the challenges on the ground, one of the first measures taken by the AU was reinforcing the contingents on the ground. We were thus able to deploy in the month following the transfer of authority, thanks to the United States, two additional battalions of 850 personnel each. Just yesterday, in Kinshasa, a Commission team finalized discussions with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with a view to the effective integration of the Democratic Republic of the Congo contingent in the Mission.

As I speak to the Council, I can confirm that the Mission has almost reached its authorized level of 6,000 uniformed personnel. Thanks to this reinforcement and to the support of the French Operation Sangaris, as well as other measures, especially the division into sectors of the city of Bangui, the situation in the capital has improved considerably. The number of security incidents has been reduced significantly. Obviously, much remains to be done to ensure a full return to normalcy.

Unacceptable crimes continue to be committed against innocent civilians. Acts of vandalism and looting, explained in part by the social poverty afflicting Central Africans, especially youth, have not yet ceased. Many displaced persons, including those living in subhuman conditions at the airport, have not been able to return to their homes, and fear is a reality that we cannot deny.

MISCA, with the support of Operation Sangaris, is working to meet those challenges by establishing checkpoints and by carrying out patrols round the clock.

The Mission is about to reach its deployment plan inside the country; a total of 4,000 military personnel should be positioned in various areas of the countryside. That operation is under way even as we speak. That presence, together with that of Sangaris, has made it possible to avert many atrocities, to reassure communities and to facilitate humanitarian action. Once again, we must do a lot more, act more quickly and be more effective in our action. MISCA is resolved to meet those challenges.

I wish also to refer to other functions of MISCA. They include the task of protecting the transitional leaders, which is essential so that they can, in the present security context, accomplish their onerous task. They also include facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance under the escort and protection of convoys, which travel along the vital corridor connecting the Central African Republic to Cameroon. I would add that 500 trucks and other vehicles have benefited from this protection, which has also contributed to the resumption of trade flows and the effective collection by the Central African Republic of customs duties and related taxes on merchandise and other goods headed for the Central African Republic, so that it may have the resources necessary to carry out its functions.

Those efforts have been supported by the encouraging developments that have taken place in the political process as a result of the decisions of the extraordinary summit of ECCAS, held on 9 and 10 January. The election of Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, the new interim Head of State, and the subsequent appointment of a new Prime Minister and the formation of a Government helped to relaunch the transition.

The main security threat we face relates to the so-called anti-Balaka militias. In response, MISCA, with the support of Operation Sangaris, is implementing a series of practical measures to neutralize those militias. Those efforts, which started a few days ago in Bangui, have been intensified and expanded to the rest of the territory of the Central African Republic.

Within the framework of periodic reports to the Security Council, we will be able to provide more

detailed information about the efforts made and the difficulties encountered. I wish to mention in that respect some of the challenges that are hampering MISCA's activities, which relate to an insufficiency of logistical and communication means, despite the considerable support of international partners whose contributions I wish once again to commend. They relate also to the current limited capacities of the Government of the Central African Republic. The absence of a judicial system makes it very difficult to restore law and order, as those arrested by the international forces cannot be brought to justice. With the support of the United Nations Development Programme, we have been able to establish a transitional arrangement that is currently in operation.

At this meeting, the Secretary-General has submitted proposals on what he believes should be undertaken with regard to the current situation in the Central African Republic. In his letter of 17 February, which we have requested be transmitted to members of the Security Council for information and action, as needed, the President of the Commission identified a series of measures, which, rapidly implemented, will allow us to significantly strengthen the effectiveness of our action. I could not list those measures in detail in this statement, but allow me quickly to go through them.

First is the pressing need to strengthen MISCA. That involves increasing both the troop strength of the Mission, in particular in terms of police personnel, and the equipment. As we have said before, African countries are ready to contribute additional personnel. Also, for that reason and others, related in particular to the launching of the European operation, we are not in favour of deploying any coalition of the willing, which would only deflect us from the urgent and imperative task of strengthening MISCA. While awaiting the deployment of additional troops and in response to the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General over the distribution of food aid to the interior of the country, MISCA is ready to escort the humanitarian convoys headed to the places concerned.

The second step is to undertake additional measures to consolidate the gains already made and to speed up the lasting restoration of security throughout the Central African Republic. In that regard, I refer to the payment of civil servant salaries and retiree pensions, as well as support for the resumption of basic public services, including re-forming core security forces and restoring the judicial system and prison facilities. In our view, those are not medium-term problems to be addressed once security is restored but, instead, they are urgent issues on which immediate action is required. Let us not be mistaken: no international force, whatever its size, will be able to ensure the degree of security needed without the active involvement of the Central African side. The financial cost of such measures is a tiny fraction of what should be mobilized for a new military operation.

The third measure is consolidating the progress made in the political process thanks to the decisive action of ECCAS leaders. It goes without saying that there will be no lasting security benefit without a viable political track. The leaders of the region are showing exceptional willingness and commitment. We must better support their action, in particular through the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic, which, I hope, will be convened soon.

The last step is the rapid and effective implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolutions recently adopted by the Security Council. That involves ensuring the implementation of the targeted sanctions against individuals and entities that are undermining the current efforts, and accelerating the work of the international commission of inquiry into the violations of human rights and humanitarian law. Such measures will certainly significantly help to prevent further atrocities. I congratulate the Secretary-General on his statement to us today. I can ensure that commission of the full attention and cooperation of MISCA and the African Union.

At this stage, I would like to underscore that the approach that we are proposing will make it possible to better support the African efforts. That is essential because there will certainly not be lasting solutions to the challenges to peace and security on the continent without African ownership. Where there is a strong African political will, as is undeniably the case of the Central African Republic, it must be supported and nurtured. Our partners, whatever their goodwill, could still not compensate for our shortcomings.

The proposed approach therefore is part of a comprehensive approach that makes it possible to combine the respective comparative advantages of the African Union and the United Nations. In the current stabilization phase, a peace support operation by the African Union is the best proposed option. Its success

will open the way for the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation to support the recovery process of the Central African Republic in the long term.

We therefore see MISCA as an essential stage for stronger involvement by the United Nations and, in truth, of the entire international community. With that in mind, in order to leave the United Nations a strong mission to lead the next phase of the peace process, the Council must support the establishment of a logistical support model for MISCA, as the Secretary-General has just proposed, financed by the contributions made for the recovery. We thank the Secretary-General for his commitment to work for that goal.

We are at a crucial stage in our efforts to successfully overcome the challenges in the Central African Republic. The priority is clear: to protect the civilian population, to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to establish conditions for a successful transition. As the Secretary-General has so rightly said, the challenges that we face require the involvement of all. They go beyond our individual capacities. The effort must be collective in order for it to succeed.

It is also urgent to decide how to best combine the respective advantages of each of the actors concerned, while promoting our common objective for Africa's greater empowerment in managing the problems facing the continent. We sincerely believe that the proposals made by the President of the Commission, Mrs. Zuma, will allow us to satisfactorily meet the current challenges.

In a few years, when we look back at the Central African Republic and the way in which we managed the current situation, we should be in a position to say that we responded to the Central African people's appeal for help while advancing the international partnership for peace, security and stability in Africa. Members should not add to the frustration of Africa, the only continent not to have a permanent representative on this very important body of the Security Council, by strengthening today and forever the necessary prior consultation of the African Union for the consideration of any issue concerning Africa. Our three non-permanent members are already ready to perform that task, if not as a pen holder at least as the adviser on conflict situations on the continent.

I could not conclude without expressing our deep appreciation to all our international partners that support MISCA. The donor conference held in Addis Ababa on 1 February marked the occasion for a true expression of solidarity with Central Africans and of support for MISCA. May this meeting of the Council strengthen that momentum, thereby bringing us still closer to achieving the noble common objectives that we are pursuing together in the Central African Republic.

The President: I thank Mr. Chergui for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Dembassa Worogagoi (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, first of all, to pay tribute to the international community's commitment to the pursuit of lasting solutions to the Central African crisis. That commitment has shown itself in recent months through the adoption of resolutions 2121 (2013), 2127 (2013) and 2134 (2014), authorizing the deployment of the African forces of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA), supported by French and European troops, with a robust mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

The presence of the African forces of MISCA, supported by the French troops of Operation Sangaris, helped to prevent the Central African Republic from descending into complete chaos. I would like to express the deep gratitude of the Central African people to the countries that committed troops on the ground, who paid a heavy price in human lives during the operations to secure the cities of Bangui and Boassangoa, which were at the heart of the crisis.

However, even if the worst has been avoided in Bangui, the capital, the situation remains volatile. The capital still faces the problem of maintaining public order, which should be the responsibility of the police supported by a functional judiciary. That is forcing much of the population to remain in camps for internally displaced persons on the outskirts of the airport and in churches and mosques.

In the rest of the country, where the majority of the 4.5 million Central Africans live, the security challenge is enormous. Taking advantage of the State's collapse in this vast country of 623,000 square kilometres — which is the size of France and Belgium combined — hordes of criminals of all kinds are murdering, raping, looting and committing other serious violations of human rights. The civilian population is forced to flee into the bush, where they fall prey to hunger and disease. We

fear the worst, with the imminent arrival of the rainy season.

Beyond the security issues, there is a State to rebuild in the Central African Republic. The task is huge, as the administration of the State must be relaunched, civil order restored and elections prepared for.

In order to help meet those challenges, the Central African authorities have formally requested from the Secretary-General, in a letter dated 27 January 2014 and transmitted to the Secretariat on 3 February 2014 (S/2014/83, annex), the rapid deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation. The deployment of a multidimensional peacekeeping operation in Central African Republic seems to be the best solution to the current challenges for three main reasons.

First, it would provide the troops involved with the means for sufficient mobility, namely, vehicles and air transportation, to operate in an area with few roads.

Secondly, such a deployment would provide access to the resources and expertise required to deal with the situation in the Central African Republic while relying on United Nations experience in managing complex crises. In that regard, I am referring to the challenges in the humanitarian sphere and in terms of monitoring violations of human rights, combating impunity and restoring the State's capacities throughout the country.

Finally, it would lend credibility to the process of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation.

The establishment of a peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic must be decided upon as quickly as possible, given the time required for its effective deployment and the extreme volatility of the security situation in the Central African Republic.

I would like to conclude by highlighting that there is no contradiction between deploying a United Nations peacekeeping operation and the work of the troops of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA). I believe they can only complement each other, as MISCA's purpose is to become the core of a peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.